

EFFECTS OF DISOBEDIENCE.

PUBLISHED UNDER THE DIRECTION OF
THE COMMITTEE OF GENERAL LITERATURE AND
EDUCATION, APPOINTED BY THE SOCIETY FOR
PROMOTING CHRISTIAN KNOWLEDGE.

L O N D O N ;

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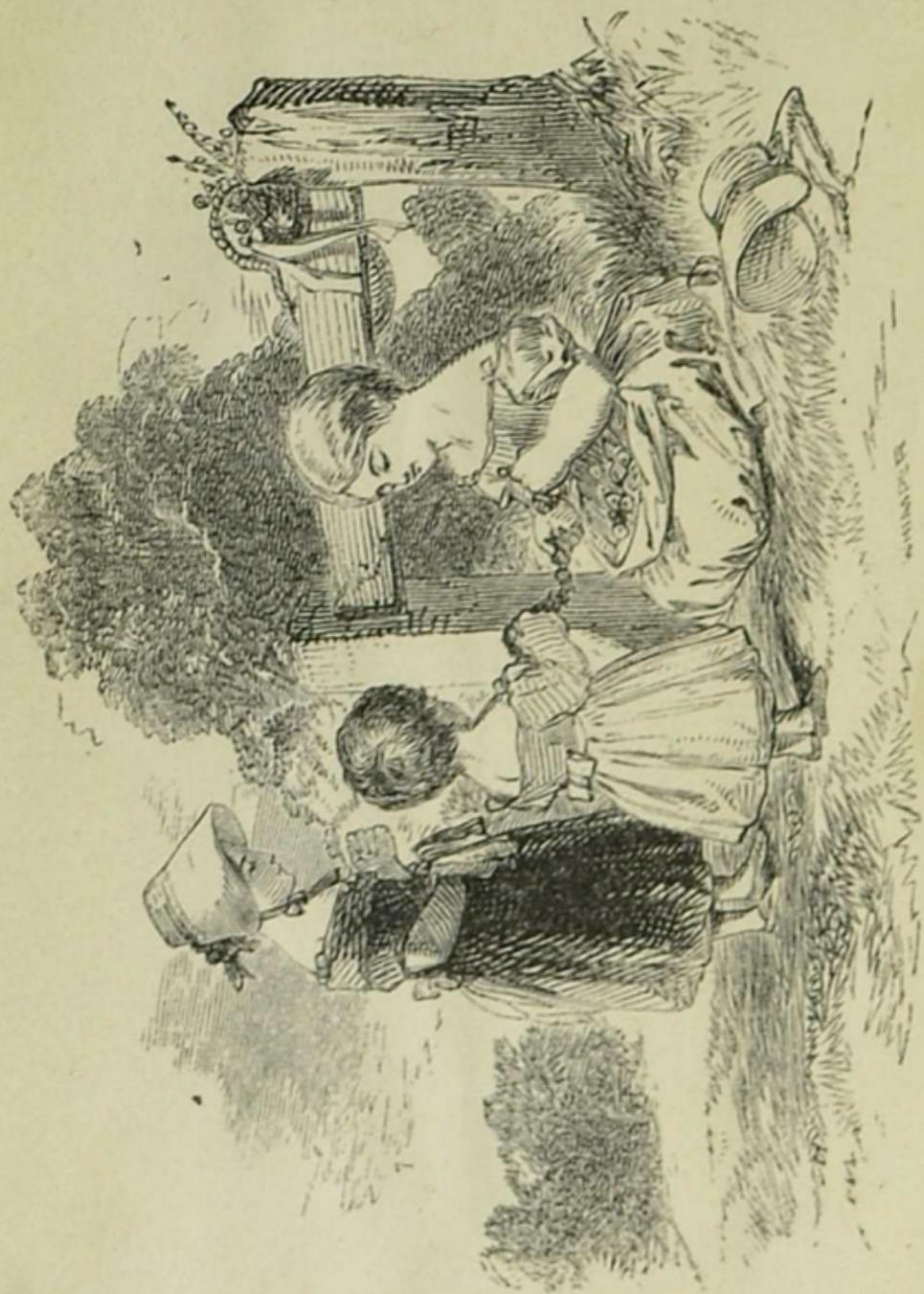
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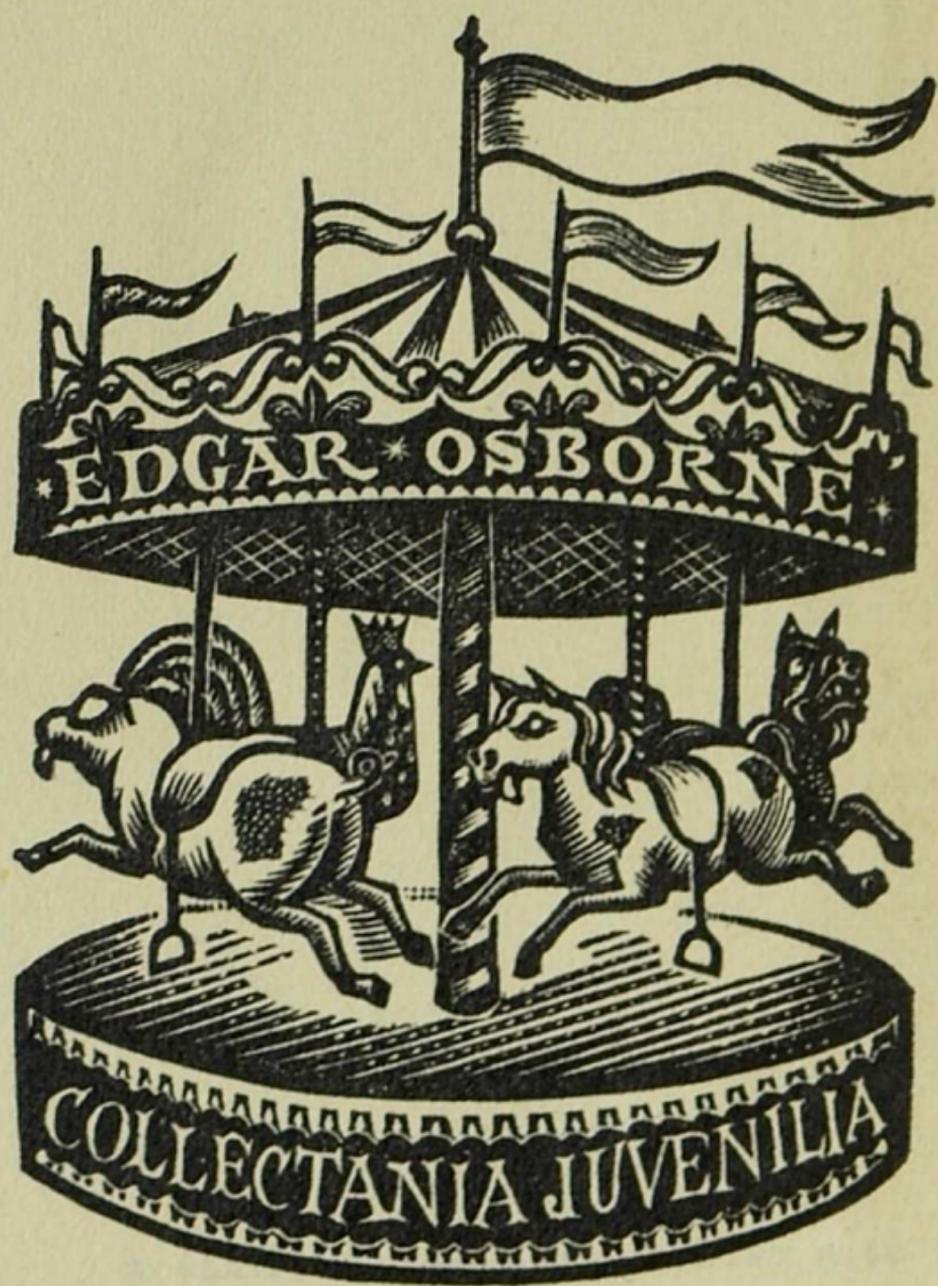
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GREAT QUEEN STREET, LINCOLN'S INN FIELDS,
AND 4, ROYAL EXCHANGE.

1847.



THE
EFFECTS OF DISOBEDIENCE.

MRS. COTTON had three children, named George, Lucy, and Mary. George, the eldest, was eight years old, a good-natured boy, and very fond of his two little sisters. Their mother one day left them, to go to market for some dinner, but before she went out, she told George that he must take care of his sisters, and not let them go near the fire ; that she would rather it should go out, than that they should even poke it. " You can," said she, " play in the backyard ; it is not very cold

to-day, and you may have your new ball."

It was the Christmas holidays, or two of the children would have been at school, and Mrs. Cotton would then have asked a neighbour to take charge of little Mary, while she went out. The children took the ball, and went into the backyard; but Mrs. Hunt, one of the people who lived in the house with them, had been washing that morning, and had hung her wet clothes on lines across the yard, so that the children had no room to play at ball; and indeed, Mrs. Hunt told them, that they must not run in and out, amongst her wet things, and make them dirty. The children did not care to sit down on the step of the yard, the weather was too cold; and as their mother would not let them play in the streets, they went back to their room again.

George sat down in the window-seat, to finish the tail of a kite his grandfather had promised to give him that Christmas.

Lucy had a border to hem for her mother's night-cap, and she gave Mary an old wooden doll to play with, and put to sleep in a little cradle. The children were busy and amused for some time; but Lucy finished her work; George had no more paper to go on with, until his mother came home; and Mary got tired of the doll. "If mother," said George, "had not told us *not* to go near the fire, we could have roasted one of the apples that aunt gave us yesterday." "So we could!" said Lucy: we might have tied a string to the stem, and hung it from that nail in the chimney piece, like mother roasts a bit of meat sometimes." "I am sure," said George, "mother would not mind *my* doing it; because, you know, I am so much older than you both are." "So you are, and a big boy too; but I think we had better wait until mother comes home, and ask her to let us." "Oh," said George, "then mother will want the fire herself; and I am almost sure she

would not care if I took just one apple. She said she would make them into a pudding for to-morrow's dinner." "Well then," said Lucy, "you had better not take any." "I shall take one," said George; "and I can tell mother that she must give me the smallest piece of pudding to-morrow. You see I cannot go on with my kite-tail, and I have nothing to do; and I should so like to roast an apple! Mother cannot be back yet, for I heard her say she should not be here again until past twelve, and the church clock has just struck eleven."

George, like a naughty boy, then went to the cupboard, and took out the basket of apples; as soon as Mary saw them, she wanted to have one. "No indeed," said George, "I shall not give you an apple: if you will be a good girl, and wait until I have roasted one, you shall have a large piece of it." Mary did not like waiting, and began to cry. George gave her a piece of bread and sugar to

keep her quiet. His mother had often told George not to touch anything in the cupboard, while she was out, unless they wanted a bit of bread, because they were hungry; but George did wrong, and was quite unmindful of his mother's commands. Mary eat her piece of bread and sugar, and then wanted more; and George again got on the rail of a chair, to reach the sugar basin, which he had pushed in far back on the shelf, but, even then, he could hardly get at it. Little Mary shook the chair, and down fell George, with the sugar basin in his hand; it broke, and the sugar was spilled on the floor.

"Now, George," said Lucy, "pray give up all thoughts of being further disobedient; you know your Catechism well, and what the fifth commandment tells us, to honour our father and mother; and we are taught at the Sunday-school that, in order to fulfil that commandment, we must obey them in all things. And *that*, you know, is God's word; and George,

dear, even if we were to roast the apple, we should not have any pleasure in eating it, for mother has told us so very often not to go near the fire when she is out, that we should feel that we were doing wrong."

George was older than Lucy, and, of course, ought to have known better, and to have acted as she wished; but I am sorry to say he paid no attention to her, but began looking for a piece of string to tie on the apple, first carefully scraping up the sugar from the floor, and putting it into another basin.

George *said* he should tell his mother he was sorry he had broken the basin, but that Mary would not be quiet until he gave her some sugar.

The apple was now hung before the fire, and George watched it spin round and round, and now and then gave it a little push with his finger. Lucy and Mary sat on the window-seat, where George had told them to sit and look on.

But Mary soon got down, and came nearer and nearer to the fire. "Lucy," said Mary, "do come here; it smells so nice; it must be nearly done." George now saw that the apple was burning. It was much too hot to touch any more; so he could not turn it without wrapping his hand in his pinafore. The fire caught a corner of it, and in a moment he was in a blaze. Little Mary was close to her brother, the sleeve of her frock caught fire, and all the children began to scream as loud as they could. Mrs. Hunt, the washerwoman, was in the passage, and opened the door in great alarm. When she saw the children, she ran back to the court-yard, pulled a wet blanket from the line, and threw it over poor George and his little sister. The wet blanket put out the fire, but not before they were both much burnt. Mrs. Hunt went directly for the doctor, leaving her daughter with the children, who were crying, and in great pain. She met their mother at

the street door, and told her as gently as she could what had happened; and Mrs. Cotton was in great trouble when she came to her room, to hear the children's sobs and cries. The doctor soon came, and after dressing the burns, he told Mrs. Cotton to put George and Mary to bed. Mrs. Cotton soon found out how the sad accident had happened, and told Lucy, that she ought to be most thankful she had not been burnt as well as her brother and sister.

“I cannot again leave home,” said she to Mrs. Hunt, “without putting out my fire, and locking up my cupboard. How much I wish that I had not trusted the children to be alone with a fire in the room! I thought George was old enough to be trusted, or I would not have done so. But for your presence of mind in thinking of your wet blanket in the yard, they might have been burnt to death.”

Lucy was obliged to explain to her mother how this sad accident happened,

and also to tell her that she had begged George not to be disobedient. Her mother said she hoped that the sad sight of her brother and sister's sufferings would be a caution to her never to play with fire, or do any thing that she was bid not to do.

George spent all his Christmas holidays in bed, and could not, of course, go to his grandfather's house. The old man lived in the country, and had invited George and Lucy to spend two or three days with him. Mrs. Cotton was glad to think that her dear Lucy could have the pleasure, though she would have enjoyed it much more if her brother had been her companion.

When George was well enough to go to school, the boys got round him, to look at the great scars on his neck, and to wonder if his eyelashes and eyebrows would grow again. He told them he had been burnt from disobeying his mother's commands, he hoped that God would for-

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give him, and that his playfellows would never, like him, try to play with fire. The master, too, spoke to them all, and said that, although he was sorry to see his young friend George so much scarred, yet that he hoped it might be a useful lesson to them, as well as to him; might show them the effects of disobedience, and also remind them that when they were left at home, in the care of their younger brothers and sisters, it was their duty to set them a good example, instead of leading them astray. Mrs. Cotton suffered from George's disobedience long after he was quite well. At Christmas, the savings she had hoped to lay out for herself and the children in warm clothes, went to pay the doctor's bill; and as she was a poor woman, it was hard upon her to have to buy a frock and pinafore, in place of those that were burnt from George's doing what he had been so often told not to do. Lucy tried, while her sister was ill, to help her mother

in every way that she could. Poor Mary was cross and fretful, from the pain of the burns; and Lucy would sit by the bed-side, and try to quiet her by showing her a picture book the doctor had been so kind as to give them. Then she would sing her a little hymn, to try and put the poor little girl to sleep. When Lucy saw the great red marks on Mary's arm and neck, she was indeed thankful that God had been so good as to spare her the pain of being burnt like her brother and sister.

“I am sure,” said Lucy one day to her mother, “that you need not have asked Mr. Jarvis the blacksmith to make you that iron thing to put before the fire, for we never *shall* go near the fire any more.” “I dare say,” said her mother, “that you think so now, Lucy; but it will be so long a time before I can trust George alone in a room where there is a fire, that I shall feel more comfortable when I am

obliged to go out, to know that he will not be able to roast apples, or to do anything that may cause you to suffer like poor little Mary.

THE END.

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